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ABSTRACT

The evaluation methodology delineated in this paper is a work in progress. The purpose is to develop a method for evaluating social studies curriculum materials that encompasses the materials' comprehensibility and the perspective offered. The paper draws from past evaluations that focused on either comprehensibility or perspective but have not typically encompassed both types of evaluation. It offers examples of studies for comprehensibility such as those done by I. L. Beck and M. G. McKeown (1991), Bonnie B. Armbruster and Thomas H. Anderson (1984), Jere Brophy (1990) and Jane J. White (1988). It offers examples of studies for perspective as well, such as those by Jean Anyon (1978, 1983), Ray Allen Billington (1966), Joel Taxel (1984), Linda S. Levstik (1990), and others. As a general overview, the evaluation methodology determines whether the curriculum materials are age appropriate, educationally significant, and offers the perspective of groups of people important to the topic. Noting that a content goal is necessary for each topic being evaluated, the paper states that this content goal serves as a model for age appropriate and educationally significant information on the particular topic. It explains that, for the first use of the evaluation, three topics from the original textbook series for elementary school social studies by Hanna and Rugg: (1) pre-industrial Pacific Island societies, specifically Samoa and New Guinea; (2) Dutch colonial New York; and (3) the beginnings of industrialization in the 18th century English textile industry. It notes that the aim is to use this evaluation in the future with other materials, modern and historical fiction and non-fiction tradebooks, videos and computer resources as well as textbooks and materials at grade levels other than elementary. (Contains 22 references.) (BT)

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ED 471 102

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE METHOD FOR EVALUATING SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM MATERIALS: WITH EXAMPLES FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Paper presented at the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies
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Introduction

There is a reason why I have entitled this presentation *Towards a Comprehensive Method for Evaluating Social Studies Curriculum Materials.* The evaluation methodology is still very much "a work in progress". My purpose is to develop a method for evaluating social studies curriculum materials that encompasses both the materials' comprehensibility and the perspective offered. I have drawn from past evaluations focused on either comprehensibility or perspective that have not typically encompassed both types of evaluation. There are examples of studies for comprehensibility such as those done by Beck and Mckeown (1991), Armbruster and Anderson (1984), Brophy (1990) and White (1988). There are examples of studies for perspective as well, such as those by Anyon (1978,1983), Billington (1966), Taxel (1984), Levstik (1990) and others.

My first application and use of this comprehensive evaluation methodology is with two of the original textbooks series for elementary school social studies that were published in the 1930s and 1940s by Paul R Hanna with others and Harold O Rugg with his then wife Louise Krueger. I anticipate using this evaluation in the future with other materials, modern as well as historical, fiction and non-fiction tradebooks, videos and computer resources as

well as textbooks and materials at levels other than elementary. Through this use I anticipate refining and developing the methodology further.

Overview of the Method of Evaluation

As a general overview, my evaluation methodology will determine whether the curriculum materials are age appropriate, educationally significant and give the perspective of groups of people important to the topic. A content goal is necessary for each topic being evaluated. This content goal serves as a model for age appropriate and educationally significant information on the particular topic.

For my first use of the evaluation, I chose three topics from the Hanna and Rugg texts; pre-industrial Pacific Island societies, specifically Samoa and New Guinea, Dutch colonial New York and the beginnings of industrialization in the eighteenth century English textile industry. An example of the process of determining a content goal that is age appropriate, educationally significant and includes important groups is shown in the decisions I made about a content goal for Dutch colonial New York at the fourth grade level.

Dutch colonial New York has a vast area of content that is not educationally significant to the topic at this grade level. Large amounts of information on seventeenth century history can be considered part of the content, but would not be educationally significant for elementary school (Flinders, Noddings and Thornton, 1986). For example, it is important for fourth grade students to realize that the major European powers during the time of New York's original settlement were in an intense rivalry over trade routes and the acquisition of colonies. Some of this rivalry played itself out in the establishment of the fur and tobacco trade in New York, the introduction of

settlers to protect New Amsterdam as a Dutch trading post and the eventual fall of Dutch New Amsterdam to the English.

There is much more to these rivalries, however, particularly as they occurred on a world stage. There was intermittent warfare between England and Holland and Spain throughout the period that the Dutch controlled New York. Some of the hostilities occurred in Europe, some in the East Indies, some in the West Indies and some on the coast of Africa. The actual takeover of Dutch New Amsterdam by the English was part of a broader Anglo-Dutch War being waged in Europe (Archdeacon, 1976; Goodfriend, 1992; Homberger, 1994; Lunt, 1957; Meinig, 1986).

Determining the key concepts and ideas to be covered in this topic and the degree of detail for an elementary student is a judgment decision. It seems reasonable to assume that in the fourth grade it is important to understand the basic nature of the rivalry between European countries. Included should be an understanding of the importance at that time of spices for food flavoring and preservation, the use of furs for clothing and the acquisition of gold as currency. Why countries wanted colonies should also be understood. To go into minute detail at this level about the variety of political ramifications of these rivalries seems unnecessarily complex and therefore not educationally significant for a discussion of Dutch colonial New York in fourth grade. Therefore, these details on the rivalries between European countries are not included in my content goal for this topic.

Another example of a content goal for a topic in the Hanna and Rugg textbooks is industrialization in the eighteenth century English textile industry. The following is an outline of the important concepts and supporting facts that I

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felt were educationally significant and age appropriate for this topic. The level is sixth grade. The information was obtained from general texts on the beginnings of industrialization that can be found in a university library or a good public library (Ashton, 1968/1997; Mantoux, 1928/1961; Mokyr, 1998; Lunt, 1957).

Concepts and Facts
For
Industrialization in the Eighteenth Century English Textile Industry

- Economic change is gradual and occurs over centuries, not years. Economic change is evolutionary not revolutionary.
- The Nature of Economic Change to Industrialization
  - The change from human muscle to mechanical power
  - The development of specialized tasks in the manufacturing of goods
  - The development of the factory system
- Certain conditions were necessary for industrialization to occur in England in the eighteenth century:
  - An increase in population that provided laborers for new industries:
    - Population growth was effected by a decrease in the death rate and an increase in birth rates
    - There was better nutrition because better crops were introduced that provided better food to eat (the potato is an example)
    - There was wider distribution of crops for food because the transportation system was improved with the building of canals and better roads
    - There were improvements in personal hygiene and medicine, such as the use of a vaccination against smallpox
    - Small farmers did not have to spend all of their time growing food for survival and had time available for other work

- A division of labor existed before industrialization
- Peasants would complete part, but not all, of the process of manufacturing in their homes (called cottage industry).

  Examples are:

  The use of spinning wheels to spin thread

  The use of hand looms to weave cloth

- Advances in transportation:
  - New road systems and canal systems were developed within England
  - Faster ships were developed for ocean transportation between England and other countries
  - It was now possible to purchase raw materials and sell finished goods in a much wider area. Previously purchase and sales had not extended beyond the local town and regional marketplaces.
- An increase in available capital and new inventions:
  - People had extra income that they didn't need to spend just to survive
    - Wealthy people were willing invest money in new inventions that were powered by wind, water or steam, not human muscle
    - New inventions created the factory system
      - New machines, such as the power loom for weaving cloth, were too big to be housed in workers' homes
      - Specially designed buildings called factories were built to house the new machines
    - New machinery was the result of the work of many individuals
      - A successful invention, such as the power loom, was the result of many previous unsuccessful attempts to apply power other than human muscle to weaving on a loom
      - New inventions were not the result of one man's work

- Industrialization of manufacturing and the factory system created two distinct economic classes, owners and workers

Perspective

Major Groups involved in Industrialization

Owners of the New Factories

Workers in the New Factories

Workers in Cottage Industries

Workers within Different Specialties, such as Spinners and Weavers

Consumers of the Manufactured Cloth, particularly Women

Having accomplished the first step of creating a content goal for the evaluation, the next step is to conduct the evaluation itself using the content goal as a model for information that should be in the materials and using different categories as an assessment guide for comprehensibility and perspective. The written evaluation itself is qualitative and follows Eisner's (1991) idea of educational connoisseurship and criticism. The writing in this type of qualitative evaluation uses thick and vivid description and interpretation in order for the reader to see what the evaluator sees.

The categories for evaluating comprehensibility include:

1) The adequacy and explicitness of main concepts
2) The presence of asides in the text passage that distract from the main concept
3) The adequacy of examples and comparisons used to develop the passage's main concept
4) The presence of causal relationships (a cause followed by a consequence).
5) A sense of time appropriate to the target grade level
6) No understatement of important information

The categories for evaluating perspective include an evaluation of preference for a particular racial, gender, ethnic, cultural, economic or national group through:

1) Word usage
2) The author's text narrative for sympathy for some groups over others
3) Inclusion or exclusion of groups relevant to the topic
4) The cumulative implication of the section of the text being evaluated for a preference for particular groups

The following is an example of the grid that I created for evaluating eighteenth century industrialization in the English textile industry. The vertical line is made up of the key concepts that are in the content goal and that I considered important for an understanding of the topic. The horizontal line contains the categories for comprehensibility and the categories for perspective. I created two separate grids. One grid was for evaluating comprehensibility and one grid was for evaluating perspective. I used the squares created by the grid to make notes based on each concept and in each category for comprehensibility and perspective. The following is an example of the grid I used for Hanna's chapters on industrialization with notes for the concept of industrialization as revolution or evolution.

Hanna
Industrialization in the English Textile Industry
COMPREHENSIBILITY

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Concepts	Explicit Main Concept	Asides	Examples and Comparisons for Main Concept	Causal Relation ships	Sense of Time	Understatement of Important Information
Evolution not revolution	Does not use the term industrial revolution, does not explain it as a misnomer	Talks about many technolog ical advances that have little to do with England or the textile industry ex: making fire, taming animals	Discusses technological advances and emphasizes how slow it was. "men from the ancient world of Egypt, Greece and Rome could have gotten along without much trouble in 1700s England. Biggest surprises would be books, guns and clocks"	States that demand by women for cotton goods and colonial markets for manufacture d goods caused new methods of invention Check Mokyr: demand does not cause industrializat ion- more supply may have created the demand	Ok, uses dates, ok for 6th grade	Does not discuss the misnomer of revolution, never uses the term "industrial revolution" (does in chapter on factories but does not identify revolution as rapid change) Left with the implication that industrialization happened suddenly (p.104) "A lot of people were ready and willing to live and work in new and different ways" (p.28) Then contradicts in describing inventions across millennium "In spite of all these things, changes in the way people lived had come rather slowly after all"

Hanna
Industrialization in the English Textile Industry
PERSPECTIVE

Concepts	Word Usage	Narrative Sympathy – Author's Sympathy	Inclusion of Relevant Groups	Cumulative Implication
Evolution not revolution (beginnings of industrializat ion in cloth production)	There are no "simple" people as with Pacific Islanders and American Indians	Subtle mockery – women needed finer things attitude, underlying implication of male superiority and women's frivolity (p25) "The very idea! To think that the government dared pass a law telling them they could not wear the kind of dresses they wished!"	Consumer demand (women) created impetus for cotton manufacturing – does not say upper class but says "fashionable" women – later implies that only with cheaper production techniques could lower class women afford cotton cloth (p36) a lot left for	Women as consumers were instrumental in the beginnings of industrialization in cotton manufacturing – but their needs were somewhat frivolous – nothing about cotton cloth being easier to clean, therefore encouraging better sanitation and more

			students to assume. "fashionable" means upper class not farmers but he doesn't say so directly	comfortable in warm weather

Explanation of the Categories for Evaluating Comprehensibility and Perspective

Categories for Evaluating Comprehensibility

Adequacy and Explicitness of Main Concepts: The adequacy of the main concepts is a key component in making text passages comprehensible to students. There needs to be enough concepts to make the topic comprehensible but not so many concepts that the student is overwhelmed. The rule in this category is that fewer concepts result in more learning. Students will have better understanding of a few concepts developed in depth than many concepts with little, if any, development. Explicitness refers not only to specific information being given in the development of each concept, but the explicit differentiation in the text between what information is important and what information is not as important.

For example, in developing the concept of food production, preparation and consumption by people in the Pacific islands, foods for special feast days should clearly be differentiated from foods gathered or produced, prepared and eaten on a daily basis. When the emphasis in a text is only on the preparation of special feast day foods, the impression is left with young students that these foods are daily fare for the people being studied. It is similar to leaving an impression that Americans have Thanksgiving dinner every night.

Asides: Asides within a text passage may contain useful and important information. The difficulty with asides and their affect on the comprehension of

the text is that they take away from the development of the main concept and reduce a student's ability to comprehend the concept. Therefore it is not the information itself that affects comprehensibility but its placement with in the written text.

For example, in a discussion of the initial contact between Henry Hudson's crew and native peoples in the area that is present day New York City, a discussion of Native American foods and their preparation is an aside that does not help in the development of the main concept. The main concept is the events surrounding these first encounters from each side's perspective. Native American culture, which would include traditional foods, is important in a discussion of groups found during the initial contact and settlement of New York by Europeans. But this information is an aside when placed in the middle of a discussion of the first arrival of Henry Hudson, when that arrival did not include an invitation by the Native Americans for the Europeans to share their food.

Examples and Comparisons: Clear and adequate examples and comparisons make concepts easier to understand and comprehend. For example, to state simply that in the process of industrialization production of goods such as cotton cloth moved from the workers homes into factories built to house looms for weaving, may not create the understanding that is intended. In fact, an elementary child may wonder why a worker, who could do all his work at home without having to commute to a factory or move to a city, where a factory was located, would be in favor of such a change. The comparison needs to be clear with adequate explanations of the limited living space in workers' cottages where a loom for weaving often took up most of the living space.

Therefore, to weave cloth outside the home would be preferable for the weaver, because more space could be available for the everyday needs of his family. The fact that most dwellings of the rural working class in eighteenth century England consisted of one large room, in which the family cooked, ate and slept needs a clear statement. This information would help to create through examples and comparisons an understanding of why the change to a factory system would be preferred by the workers as well as the owners of the factories, who now had direct control over the weaving of cloth.

Causal Relationships: It is important that a cause in the text narrative be followed by a consequence. Textbooks usually point out that Native Americans accepted metal tools and cloth from Europeans in exchange for furs. These are important components in the beginnings of the fur trade in North America. Typically little emphasis is put on the consequences for the natives of obtaining metal tools and cloth. To a modern child it seems faintly ridiculous that the native groups would put such great importance on obtaining what seem to be such ordinary objects. This same response occurs towards Pacific Islanders when they are first introduced to metal tools and cloth by Europeans. The consequences of obtaining these objects need to be clearly outlined. This understanding can be obtained by comparing the chopping down of a tree with a stone ax to the chopping down of a tree with an iron ax or the use of cloth for clothing as compared to creating clothing from woven vegetation as Pacific Islanders did or from animal skins as native Americans did.

Appropriate Sense of Time: The understanding of historical time differs at different age levels. Generally by the end of elementary school, students have an adult sense of historical time. Dates structured into historical

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understanding and terms such as, the end of the eighteenth century, have meaning and can be put into historical context. For example, the beginnings of industrialization in the English textile industry, the last section of text I evaluated, are intended for the sixth grade and are evaluated with these capabilities in mind.

The other sections of text that are evaluated are written for third graders, who are typically eight years old and fourth graders who are typically nine years old. At age eight students are not usually able to incorporate dates into historical understanding, whereas a nine-year-old may better understand dates and time concepts, such as a hundred years. A nine-year-old's understanding of dates and ability to put dates into historical contexts are still limited, however. Often an eight year old, as well as nine year olds, understands historical time better in connection with themselves and their understanding of their own personal history. Examples of this understanding are time concepts such as when grandma was a child, or when my grandmother's grandmother lived (Thornton & Vukelich, 1988). Often younger children are better at correctly sequencing visual images, such as photographs, than at identifying and sequencing dates and historical periods. The sequencing of photographs or paintings historically shows younger students grasp of cultural and social change as shown in visual images of transportation, housing and clothing (Barton & Levstik; 1996).

Understatement of Important Information: Even though in the initial category for evaluating comprehensibility it is better to cover a few main concepts well than to cover many concepts inadequately, it is still important not to understate or completely ignore a concept that is crucial to the

understanding of a particular topic. For example, the fact that present day New York City has the best harbor on the east coast of North America with the longest water access into the interior of the continent by way of the Hudson River is often understated. Often more emphasis is given to the access to trade goods and not to the importance of the harbor. In the topic of early industrialization, the reliance of inventors of different machines for weaving and spinning on their unsuccessful predecessors whose ideas they built on is often understated. This understatement leaves the impression that a particular inventor acted entirely independently in having an idea and inventing a machine to carry out the idea.

Categories for Evaluating Perspective

Word Usage: An example of word usage is the use of the term patriot to refer to the rebelling colonists during the American Revolution and is an indication of an American nationalistic perspective (Billington, 1966). It is hardly likely that the British looked on the rebelling colonists as patriots. Pre-industrial societies are often described as "simple". It is often not meant as a derogatory term, nevertheless, it conveys a cultural and economic superiority by the text writers who usually live in an industrialized society. The use of these words gives a particular perspective to the text passages. In the first example, the perspective is that of the American revolutionists. In the second example, the perspective is that of wealthy, industrialized countries.

Sympathetic Coverage: There are a variety of groups who are critical to the three topics I selected for evaluation that could engage the textbook author's sympathy. The first topic, people of the Pacific Islands, specifically Samoans and New Guineans, can be evaluated for the author's attitude towards

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a pre-industrial way of life. Sympathy towards a simple, bucolic lifestyle was characteristic of children's fiction in the 1930s (Levstik, 1990a) and may be characteristic of textbooks as well. The Native Americans in the section on Dutch colonial New York also serve as an example of a pre-industrial culture. In the section on industrialization, the primary groups are workers and owners. The authors may or may not be more sympathetic to one group than the other. Sympathetic treatment of one group over another is not necessarily the same as showing a series of events from one group's perspective. In particular, the sympathy towards a simple existence does not give the perspective of the difficulties of a subsistence existence in which daily life is focused entirely on obtaining and preparing food, clothing and shelter in order to stay alive with little time for other pursuits.

Inclusion: A key component in the evaluation for perspective is whether all groups pertinent to the topic are included in the text or not. A particular example is the inclusion of Africans, both slave and free, in the text section on the establishment of colonial New Amsterdam. Africans had a key role. They provided the labor for constructing the original settlement. Their omission from the text not only denies a student information about their role in establishing the new colony but also gives the false impression that some other group was responsible for the construction of the colony.

Often women as well are not included in various topics. They are usually held to a male standard (Noddings, 2001). The male standard includes leadership in political and economic life. The achievement of women is more typically found in homemaking and care giving. In the topics chosen for this study the role of women should be included in the establishment of homes and

families in the colony of New Amsterdam, in the purchase and use, as well as the production, of cotton cloth in eighteenth century England and in the daily life of the Pacific Islands.

Cumulative Implication: This final category for the evaluation of perspective will take into account the previous categories in order to determine an overall preference shown in the text for one group over another.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in:

- the development of an evaluation methodology for social studies materials that is broader and more comprehensive than models based exclusively on comprehensibility or perspective.
- giving curriculum developers, educational researchers, writers of textbooks and children's literature, teacher educators and classroom teachers a means for the comprehensive evaluation of a variety of curriculum materials, not only textbooks, but also children's tradebooks, computer resources, and videos.
- the influence of this study's methodology and conclusions on my own choices of teaching techniques and materials in my social studies methods courses for preservice elementary teachers.

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